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Hunt's Wife Ridicules

Link to Raid

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By DANA BULLEN

Star Staff Writer

The wife of E. Howard Hunt Jr., a missing figure in the Democratic National Committee break-in, has labeled as "ridiculous" any idea that her husband had been involved in the case.

"I don't believe it," Dorothy Hunt said of press reports linking Hunt, a former CIA agent and recent White House consultant, to the burglary at the party headquarters. "The whole thing seems to me to be ridiculous."

"I feel that the papers are just putting words in people's mouths," she said yesterday.

But, Mrs. Hunt said, she was out of the country when the five suspects were apprehended June 17 at the Watergate office building. "I know absolutely nothing about it," she said.

Hunt was linked to the break-in after police found his name and home telephone number in the address books of two of the men arrested at Democratic headquarters.

Although it has been asserted that Hunt, reportedly the subject of an FBI search, had left the country, possibly going to Europe, his wife denied this. "He is not out of the country," she said.

Asked why Hunt had not come forward to explain or rebut any connection he might have to the case, Mrs. Hunt said that her husband would speak to the press "when he is ready to speak."

She said that Hunt left their home in Potomac, Md., after the case erupted into headlines because "he did not want the children to face . . . harassment" from reporters seeking to clarify his involvement.

FBI Withholds Comment

Mrs. Hunt said that her husband "obviously does not want to" talk about the case at this time and would not reveal his whereabouts. At some later time, she said she is sure he will make a statement.

Hunt's wife said no warrant or subpoena has been issued for her husband and that he has been in contact with the

FBI. It was not clear whether this referred to earlier FBI questioning after the break-in.

According to one report, Hunt at that time refused to answer questions about the case. The FBI would not comment when asked whether it presently is searching for Hunt in connection with the affair.

Meanwhile, the president of the public relations firm where Hunt worked as a writer here before the Watergate break-in acknowledge that the firm some years ago did a "public service" publicity job for an organization later said to have had CIA backing.

Robert F. Bennett, head of Robert R. Mullen & Co., said that the firm was hired for a publicity campaign for a group called "Radio Free Cuba" shortly after the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

According to Bennett, who was not with the company then, the campaign apparently was linked to efforts to broadcast information to the Cubans. While the "Radio Free Cuba" organization was not a

"CIA front," Bennett said, the CIA "helped a little" with its efforts.

"As far as I know, (except for this) the company has done no work for the CIA," Bennett said.

Planning Role Indicated

Hunt, believed to have been a key planner of the Bay of Pigs invasion, was suspended by the firm after his disappearance following the burglary at Democratic party headquarters.

The possibility of a link between the Mullen firm and CIA surfaced late last week when attorney Douglas Caddy, who helped obtain legal counsel for the suspects apprehended at the Watergate, reportedly told the grand jury he had had intimations of such a connection.

Bennett said the "Radio Free Cuba" accounts was "the only thing I can think of that Doug Caddy may have had in mind." He said that Caddy then an employee of General Foods Corp., had worked at the Mullen Company for a year two or three years ago as liaison for General Foods.

In another development, Bennett said that Mrs. Hunt picked up some of Hunt's personal belongings on Monday from Hunt's desk at the Mullen firm.

Bennett said that there was nothing in the desk bearing any relation to the Watergate incident and that Hunt's business papers already had been given to the grand jury investigating the case.